

The Weaver at Work

God uses an MTS student's gifts for his Kingdom.

Vera Ilyinich had an ordinary start to life for a girl born in Cold War-era Moscow. Vera neither discussed nor thought much about God. Church was only for lighting candles and attending Easter services.

A typical kid, Vera dreamed about what she would be when she grew up. She longed to be a fashion designer or teacher. She designed and sewed clothes for her dolls, and then pretended to be their teacher. Later, when she went to school, she set her sights on becoming a professional seamstress.

In college, a friend invited Vera to church. She attended the local fellowship and was thrilled with the openness of the people. Later, she visited one of the larger churches in Moscow. Drawn in by the beauty of the music and architecture, Vera felt God reach out to her. That day, she found herself made new in Christ.

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Shortly thereafter, she began to think about God's calling for her, and how she could serve the church. She started teaching Sunday school, but decided she needed more training. Moscow Theological Institute provided her training in biblical studies, and helped hone her teaching skills. She graduated from MTS in June.

Now Vera is an instructor at the Correspondence Bible College. Vera is also still sewing—creating and using puppets in her ministry to children. Today, the dreams of a little girl—who just wanted to make doll clothes and be a teacher—are fulfilled in a way she could never have imagined because of Moscow Theological Seminary.

VERA ILYINICH



CONTACT US

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MTS 2008 Graduation

Three graduation ceremonies to be held in 2008.

Graduation ceremonies are held several times a year on the last day of the tenth session of each "cohort," or group of students in a particular program. Graduation ceremonies were held on June 26, 2008, at Moscow Theological Seminary for nine students in Pastoral Studies and two in Christian Education. Nine more students in Pastoral Studies and two in Theology graduated on May 23, 2008. Five of the spring graduates received honors diplomas.



Churches in Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and many other nations now benefit from the hundreds of students trained by Moscow Theological Institute and Moscow Theological Seminary over the last forty years.

MTS JUNE 2008 GRADUATES

Visit us at www.russianleadership.org

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Preparing Leaders for the Church in Russia

RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES • FALL 2008

Celebrating the Harvest

MTS remembers 40 years of planting and reaping.

It was an inspiring event: The 40th anniversary of evangelical theological education in Russia on Saturday, June 21, 2008.

Amidst the backdrop of communism—persecution, hardship, poverty, and limited resources—God demonstrated his goodness and strength by raising leaders to envision and establish first a Bible school and eventually a seminary. Building on the strength of those who have gone before (see article on Page 2), Moscow Theological Seminary (MTS) is now the leading institution training church leaders for the churches of the Russian Baptist Union.

Following an afternoon cruise along the Moscow River, participants continued the celebration on the MTS campus with an evening of reminiscence. It was a joyful occasion, complete with dining, singing, poetry readings, and sharing of letters of congratulations. Many former teachers and staff, who devoted years to expanding Christian education in Russia, shared their memories—a reminder to not take for granted the freedom to spread the Gospel.

Walter Mitskevitch, the first coordinator of the Correspondence Bible College, recounted some of the obstacles government officials put in place to prevent the first classes from meeting. Even after all the requirements were met, state officials sat in on all of the courses to monitor the subjects taught—to be sure

their restrictions were closely adhered to. Instructors had to write their own course materials, which were then typed by volunteers and shared among students. And students who traveled to Moscow for classes were housed in the crowded apartments of local believers.

Alexander Kozyanko, the first Moscow Theological Seminary president, was equally inspiring, recalling the many challenges of starting a new school

which has grown to become a beacon of Christian freedom in Russia.

The day was a celebration of a fruitful harvest thanks to God's faithfulness, and a challenge to nurture the seeds which are even now being sown.



VISIT WWW.RUSSIANLEADERSHIP.ORG TO VIEW A SLIDESHOW OF THE CELEBRATION.

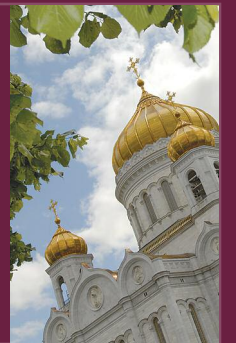
You Are Cordially Invited...

Russian Leadership Ministries invites you to attend Moscow Theological Seminary's 15th anniversary celebration, December 12-13, 2008, in Moscow. On Friday, there will be a meeting of the Russian Baptist Union Council of Education. It will be led by MTS President Peter Mitskevich, and attended by leaders of the 12 RBU schools.

On Saturday, the keynote speaker will be Dr. Denton Lotz, recently retired General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance and current President of the International Religious Liberty Association.

There will also be an opportunity to do sightseeing in Moscow during your visit.

Don't miss out on this exciting event. If you are interested in attending, please contact Ted Rodgers at Russian Leadership Ministries at (866) 599-1229.



God's Fulfillment of a Dream

40 years of religious training observed.

June 2008 marked the 40th anniversary of the offering of courses in evangelical pastoral studies in Russia. Moscow Theological Seminary is a symbol of God's faithful provision to the Russian people. Today, MTS students all across Russia rejoice in the education they now enjoy because of the prayers of visionaries over 100 years ago.

Seen from a Distance

The seeds for a seminary in Russia were sown in an unlikely place: the first ever meeting of the Baptist World Alliance Congress in London in 1905. At the Congress, Russian Baptist leaders implored the attendees for the formation of a seminary in Russia.

These leaders would not live to see their prayers answered. Despite support for the school, the seminary could not be established because of the watershed changes in Russian law.

Two World Wars and 70 years of Communist oppression could not squelch the dream of a seminary. Atheistic Communists sought to destroy the church in Russia. Pastors and Christian leaders were deported to the gulags in Siberia; others were tortured and executed. At one point, the Central Baptist Church in Moscow was the only church permitted to hold worship services—and religious education was prohibited.

Welcomed from Afar

Despite believers' immense hardships, their dream was not forgotten. In 1968, risking persecution, the church established a distance-learning school in Moscow's Central Baptist Church. Since students had to keep their full-time jobs, one-year correspondence courses were taught. Students were hungry for more, so the one-year program was expanded to three years. In 1991, the Correspondence Bible College was renamed Moscow Theological Institute (MTI), and students also began to come to Moscow twice a year for classes.

After Communism collapsed, religious freedom reemerged. In 1992, delegates from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (NBTS), led by George Boltnew, a Russian Baptist pastor and seminary classmate of Ian Chapman, then President of NBTS, visited Ukraine and Russia. During their visit, the group learned of the Russian Baptists' historic dream for a seminary.

The next year, Ian Chapman led a group of friends from the West to visit St. Petersburg and Moscow. The Russian Baptist leaders again shared their desire for a seminary, and the visitors responded with a generous financial gift that provided the resources needed for the seminary's first year of operation.

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ARTUR IOSIFOVICH MITSKEVICH, GRANDFATHER OF THE CURRENT MTS PRESIDENT PETER MITSKEVICH, INSTRUCTS CBC STUDENTS.

furtively exchanging hand-typed textbooks and sleeping on the floor in local believers' apartments while in Moscow for classes. After nine years of operating a seminary without a permanent home, a building was purchased and renovated in 2002. MTS now has fully furnished rooms for married and single students, meal services, a computer center, internet access, and air-conditioned classrooms. The library has more than 15,000 volumes, with capacity for 25,000 more.

In 2007, Moscow Theological Institute and Moscow Theological Seminary merged. MTS now offers both part-time and full-time education. Current enrollment at MTS and its learning centers across Russia is more than 450 students.

What could once only be seen by the eyes of faith is now visible because of God's faithfulness.

Answered Prayers

Finally, the dream was becoming a reality.

Moscow Theological Seminary opened its doors in October 1993, with Alexander Kozynko as its first president. Classes started the same day as the infamous Second October Revolution, a violent, but unsuccessful coup to overthrow the government.

Since 1993, nearly 150 students have graduated from the seminary's full-time program. The school's mission continues to grow. MTS has come a long way from the early CBC days of

Fall 2008 Courses at Moscow & MTS Learning Centers

Main Campus in Moscow

September 29–October 11 (Pastoral Masters Program)
October 13–22 (Superintendents Masters Program)
October 27–November 8 (Christian Education)
November 10–22 (Pastoral Education)
December 3–6 (Biblical Counseling)

Chelyabinsk

September 15–27 (Christian Education)
October 1–13 (Pastoral Studies)

Chita

November 24–December 6
(1st session of a new Pastoral Studies group)

Lenin-Kuznetsky

October 6–18 (Pastoral Studies)
November 10–22 (Christian Education)

North Caucasus Bible Institute

September 8–19 (Music & Worship)
September 22–October 3 (Christian Education)
October 6–17 (Pastoral Studies)

Noyabrsk

October 20–November 1 (Pastoral Studies)

Rostov-on-Don

November (1st session of a new Pastoral Studies group)

(Learn more about our centers at www.russianleadership.org)

RLM Contributions and Expenses

RLM Receives ECFA Accreditation

In an age when nonprofits are often criticized regarding their finances, Russian Leadership Ministries has made a commitment to be transparent regarding its use of funds. The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability has accepted RLM as a member and granted accreditation to RLM.

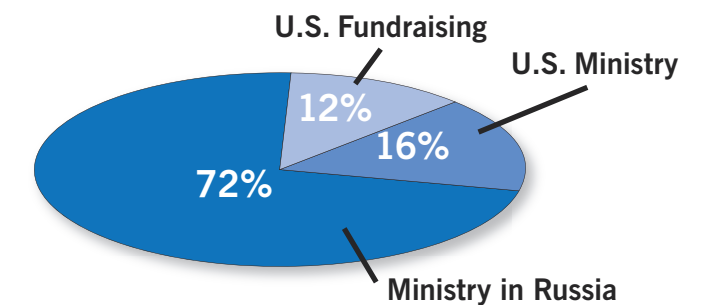
ECFA provides accreditation to leading Christian nonprofit organizations that faithfully demonstrate compliance with established standards for financial accountability, fundraising, and board governance.

A copy of the RLM audit and IRS 990 are available on the RLM (www.russianleadership.org) and ECFA (www.ecfa.org) websites.



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

2008 Distribution of Funds (YTD)



Contribution History

